

13-DAY UPRIVER MEKONG CRUISE: VIENTIANE – THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Savour the fantastic scenery of the Mekong River on your spectacular and unique cruise from Vientiane (Laos) to Luang Prabang and further west into the heart of the Golden Triangle to Chiang Saen (Thailand).



YOUR ROUTE: VIENTIANE – PAKLAY – THA DEUA – KUANG SI– LUANG PRABANG – PAK OU – PAKBENG – PAK THA – HUAY XAY – CHIANG SAEN (GOLDEN TRIANGLE)

VIENTIANE – EMBARKATION (-/-/D)

DAY 1: In the afternoon, you will embark on the Mekong Sun, a comfortable new Laotian cruise ship. This unique vessel is the first German-Laotian owned river ship with cabins on the upper Mekong. Settle into your accommodating cabin and unpack for a 13-day cruise. (Check-in is at 2:00 PM). In the afternoon you will visit the national symbol of Laos, the That Luang temple, and the picturesque Arc de Triomphe. Enjoy the spacious decks, lounge on board and attend Your welcome reception and dinner this evening. A selection of Asian and European food will be provided throughout the cruise. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun.

DEPART VIENTIANE (B/L/D)

DAY 2: The morning features an excursion to the odd Buddha Park on the banks of the Mekong. For lunch you will return to your vessel to start your spectacular river cruise upstream into formerly inaccessible parts of the Mekong river. The night is spent on a beautiful sandbank, surrounded by nothing but pure nature. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun.

WILD NATURE ALONG THE MIGHTY MEKONG (B/L/D)

DAY 3: Further north you will discover some of the most remarkable, most impressive landscapes of this still-untamed river. The landscape becomes more and more spectacular: hills covered with tropical vegetation, awe-inspiring rock formations along the river banks, and a fascinating array of fast currents and slower river parts. The power of the mighty Mekong will give your cruise the feeling of a real expedition. Enjoy the beautiful views and watch nature's wonders along the riverbanks before you head north again and stop at a remote sandbank for the night. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun.

PAK LAY (B/L/D)

DAY 4: Upstream you will stop at the small riverside community of Pak Lai, known for once possessing many colonial buildings. The purely natural landscape is only broken by the seldom sights of small villages and local herds of cattle. Enjoy the comfort and service onboard: exclusive, yet casual, you'll share the boat with no more than 26 fellow guests. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun.

THA DEUA (B/L/D)

DAY 5: During and after breakfast on board, enjoy the beautiful view and possibly watch local fishermen along the shore. Today you will see the Mekong ferry crossing at Tha Deua, connecting Luang Prabang Province with the Sayaboury province. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun.

KUANG SI – LUANG PRABANG (B/L/D)

DAY 6: After breakfast, a shore excursion leads to the Kuang Si-falls, some of the most attractive waterfalls in Laos. Your program also includes a visit to an elephant camp, where you can see the big creatures in

action. Later you will reach Luang Prabang, the former royal capital of Laos, now UNESCO World Heritage Site. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun.

LUANG PRABANG (B/L/-)

DAY 7: Today your boat will anchor centrally in Luang Prabang. On a full day visit you will get to know some highlights of this beautiful city like the Wat Xieng Thong temple and enjoy the unique atmosphere provided by the abundance of well-preserved French colonial architecture mingling with traditional Buddhist temples. A short climb up Phou Si-hill will be rewarded with a panoramic sunset view over the Mekong as well as the Khan River and the surrounding mountains. In the evening, enjoy strolling along the river promenade or visiting the colorful night market of the local Hmong minority. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun.

LUANG PRABANG – PAK OU (B/L/D)

DAY 8: In the early morning you will be able to visit the traditional giving of alms in the streets of Luang Prabang. After departing Luang Prabang you will cruise north and visit a Laotian village, observe the traditional production of Lao-Lao, the local liqueur. After a short walk through the jungle you will explore the famous Pak Ou Caves, with thousands of small Buddha statues inside the caverns. The night is spent on a secluded river bank or sandbank. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun.

TAXUANG (B/L/D)

DAY 9: Today is a day to take it all in – relax on deck, in your comfortable cabin or in the lounge and soak up the untouched scenery. The river traffic thins out as you proceed upstream, and you can enjoy the fantastic landscapes along the river. In the afternoon, you will visit a small village school sponsored by guests of the Mekong Sun. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun.

PAKBENG (B/L/D)

DAY 10: The diversity of the landscape is astonishing, now shifting to tropical hills in the background. Enjoy the tranquility of northern Laos, a real retreat from the hustle-and-bustle of daily life. Later, that day you will have a short stop in the market town of Pakbeng. As you cruise along the green hills, you will start heading upstream towards Pak Tha. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun.

PAK THA – HUAY XAY (B/L/D)

DAY 11: At Pak Tha, a small village, you will take off on a long-tail boat excursion on the Namtha River to visit a Khmu village. Upon reboarding the Mekong Sun you will proceed to the Thai-Laotian border at Chiang Khong (Thailand) and Ban Huay Xay (Laos). You then will spend a last relaxing dinner and evening in Laos. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun.

CHIANG SAEN (B/L/D)

DAY 12: Along the Thai-Lao borderline your river cruise takes you westwards into the once notorious region called the Golden Triangle. Today, your spectacular river cruise reaches Chiang Saen. The afternoon is spent on an excursion to Mae Sai, where you can stroll along the local market and enjoy a great view across the border to Burma. Afterwards you will be visiting the Doi Tung Royal Orchid Botanical Gardens, one of the most beautiful botanical gardens of Southeast Asia and go on a guided city tour of Chiang Saen. This last evening on board will be celebrated with a farewell dinner. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun.

DISEMBARK CHIANG SAEN (B/-/-)

DAY 13: After breakfast you will say goodbye to your Laotian crew. Check-out and disembark. In the morning you will visit the Golden Buddha of Sop Ruak and the new Hall of Opium. This fascinating museum, sponsored by the royal family of Thailand, gives a deep background on the history and politics of the opium trade and the health effects of opium abuse. Services end with the return to Chiang Saen.

NOTE: Every river cruise on the upper Mekong is a pioneer experience and is subject to constantly changing river conditions, including flood waters and shallows. Therefore please understand that we must reserve the right to alter the itinerary of this tour due to the logistical complexities involved. Small deviations in the tour program are sometimes necessary, depending on weather, local authorities and river and/or road conditions. For safety reasons and according to navigating conditions, these programs may be amended without previous notice.